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SUBJECT: USUNESCO-- IPDC Donors Group Meeting

¶11. Summary: A fund raising kick-off meeting of donor states for the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) program was held at UNESCO on April 24 to announce pledges already made by member states and to encourage new pledges for the IPDC "Special Account" fund. The goal is to raise 1.5 million US dollars to finance projects for the next fiscal year. Several countries made firm commitments, with others promising support, but clearly waiting to see who anteed up and for how much. Ambassador Oliver told the group that the IPDC program "goes to the heart of what UNESCO should be doing," and praised the IPDC secretariat for its professionalism. The meeting chairman asked that member states "firm up" their pledges noting that conditional pledges, though positive, are a problem, as only received funds can be appropriated to approved projects. End summary.

¶12. IPDC Intergovernmental Council chairman, Torben Krogh, (Denmark), said that there have been many reforms of the IPDC program, based on member states comments and following an independent evaluation by the University of Oslo. With the implementation of these reforms, he said that it will be necessary to revise certain statutes of the IPDC at the next UNESCO General Conference. He noted that one of the recommendations that will not be followed is to eliminate or reduce the size of the IPDC's intergovernmental council. In an effort to create greater savings, the IPDC council will meet once every two years, and only the least developed countries would be able to receive support to attend. Krogh stressed that many changes already have been implemented to improve both project planning and the quality of control over the projects. He noted that, in any case, the IPDC can never be more than what donors wish it to be.

¶12. Krogh said that the IPDC's role is to act as a catalyst for change using small amounts of money to launch media development projects. As far as evaluation of projects is concerned, Krogh said that it is not possible to individually review each one, but that improvements have been made in reviewing and evaluating randomly selected projects. Overall, Chairman Krogh said that many countries have pledged monies to the IPDC. They include "traditional" donors (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Norway, Portugal); and ten "new" donors: Australia, Andorra, Czech Republic, Iceland, Jamaica, Japan, Philippines, UK, US.

¶13. Mogens Schmidt, Director of UNESCO's Division of Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace, said that the IPDC program is important as it is the sole media development program within UNESCO, which has the only clear mandate for this activity within the UN System. He added that the program aims to improve capacity building on both individual and institutional levels.

¶14. Wijayanand Jayaweera, the IPDC program Director, noted the three top priorities for the selection of proposed projects:

Freedom of the press and media plurality; 59 projects in 2004-2006

Development of community media; 46 projects in 2004-2006

Training of media professionals, 80 projects in 2004-2006

The project beneficiaries for the 2004-2006 period were: 96 media and training institutions; 63 NGO's, 8 state institutions.

ANTE UP

¶15. Of the donors for the 2004 - 2006 period, Mr. Jayaweera said that there were five major donors (100K-300K US dollars); 4 medium level donors (50-100K US dollars); and 10 donors who gave less than 50K US dollars. For the upcoming period, he asked that member states pledge an "assured annual commitment for the next three years". The monies pledged for this year will, in fact, be spent next year.

¶16. Ambassador Oliver said that the US feels strongly that the IPDC program "goes to the heart of what UNESCO should be doing," and added that we intend to support the program to the extent we can both financially and otherwise. She added positive comments about the program's administration, saying that it was "run exactly as how we wish other UNESCO programs should be run."

¶17. Comment: We are planning to meet informally with key members of the Intergovernmental Council to get a better sense of which direction they would like to see the IPDC take in the coming cycle. The GRULAC's (Latin America and Caribbean group) recent decision to

elect Cuba to the IPDC Bureau is disturbing, and will likely force us and others to use the FIT (Funds in Trust) system to finance projects rather than support the Special Account system, which could be guided by the Bureau without the kind of input desired by the United States in terms of our participation in the program. What is unclear is how the Danish chairman and others in the Bureau will manage Cuba and whether or not other countries, out of concern for Cuba's role, will direct their funding to the FIT system, which allows for member states' control. End Comment.

OLIVER